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ABSTRACT

The bibliography project aimed at providing undergraduate libraries with additional and more recent resources by listing in separate bibliographies of 750 entries on Southeast Asia and 1200 entries on the Middle East and North Africa, each arranged by country and subject with an author index. The two computerized bibliographies, Southeast Asia: A Bibliography for Undergraduate Libraries and Middle East and North Africa: A Bibliography for Undergraduate Libraries, designed to serve as book selection tools for librarians, were graded and edited while in a pre-bibliography state by scholars and librarians who evaluated books for their degree of importance to undergraduate libraries: books that should be included in all undergraduate libraries, those that a library should have if the college offers a course in either of these areas, and books that a library would need to support undergraduate area studies. The graded draft was then produced and circulated to a panel of college librarians and other consultants for revision. This is a new approach consisting of the following features: information on the availability of each title; computer production; grading as to significance; and keying to critical reviews. A related document is ED 050 000. (SJM)

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COMPILATION OF BIBLIOGRAPHIES ON SOUTHEAST ASIA
AND THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA FOR UNDERGRADUATE LIBRARIES

June 1971

Ward Morehouse

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Ward Morehouse
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New York, New York

June 1971

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Introduction.

The project has been concerned with undergraduate library resources on Southeast Asia and the Middle East and North Africa. No language and area study program can be effective without adequate library resources for student reading and faculty research. Undergraduate library collections on "neglected" foreign areas are woefully inadequate. Among the reasons for this inadequacy are:

- 1) The lack of training of college librarians about these areas of the world
- 2) The lack of up-to-date, accurate selection tools

The project concentrated on the second reason by producing two bibliographies graded as to essentiality for undergraduate library collections, keyed to annotations in other existing bibliographies and reviews in selected scholarly and library journals. Reprints and out-of-print titles were also indicated to assist libraries in their acquisitions. It is also hoped that a by-product of the project will be the eventual reprinting of all out-of-print titles.

In order to facilitate manipulation of the data and correcting and up-dating, the material was entered on a computer-time sharing system. A program was written to sort entries by country and discipline and alphabetically.

Methods

Entries in existing bibliographies such as A Select Bibliography: Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America (and supplements for 1961-1967), compiled by the American Universities Field Staff; A Selected and Annotated Bibliography of Books and Periodicals in Western Languages, compiled by Cecil Hobbs, as well as newer books favorably reviewed in journals such as Choice and the Journal of Asian Studies were entered into the computer system. A preliminary, unedited, unselected bibliography was produced for each area. These preliminary bibliographies were then sent to scholars or librarians previously selected as editors. The editor for Southeast Asia was Donald Clay Johnson, former curator of the Southeast Asia Collection at Yale University Library, and Harry N. Howard, Adjunct Professor of Middle East Studies at the American University, was editor for the Middle East and North Africa. These individuals graded the books as to their degree of importance for undergraduate collections and eliminated titles which were either too specialized or had been superseded by newer works. After eliminating roughly half of the titles in the preliminary bibliographies, the grading of the remaining titles was as follows:

- A. 10% of the books. Books that should be in all college libraries whether or not any course work is offered.

- B. 20% of the books. Books that a college library should have if a few courses or parts of courses devoted to the area are offered.
- C. 20% of the books. Books that a library should have to support an undergraduate area studies program.

The percentages were, of course, approximations and were not followed precisely.

After the books had been graded by the area editor, the project staff added the grading to the books on the preliminary bibliographies and eliminated those which had not been graded. A graded draft was then produced and circulated to a panel of college librarians and other consultants, including academic specialists on the areas covered by the bibliographies. (A list of consultants appears in Appendix A). The graded drafts were then revised in light of comments and criticisms received.

At the same time as the graded drafts were circulated, the project staff keyed the entries to reviews in selected journals and checked each title against the National Union Catalog or the card catalogue of the New York Public Library or some other major research library to insure accuracy. The availability of each title, e.g., in print, out-of-print, in microform, was checked at the same time.

The project used an ATS computer time-sharing system to enter the materials directly on disks which provided quick access and therefore, relative ease in editing and adding information. The computer program for the project was based on an expansion of an earlier program written to produce similar bibliographies on East Asia, South Asia, and Africa south of the Sahara. The program has the capability of sorting by geographical area of the world, country, discipline, and alphabetically by the main author. The program was originally written in Honeywell 200 Easy Coder, but had to be rewritten in COBOL later to accommodate a change from the IBM 1460 to the IBM 360.

At the time of the completion of the earlier bibliographies on East Asia, South Asia, and Africa, a commercial publisher, Bro-Dart, Inc., had expressed interest in the project and agreed to publish those bibliographies as he also agreed to do for the present bibliographies. The publisher also underwrote the costs of photo-composition in order to make the size of the finished product more manageable.

Results

The principal result of the project is the publication of Southeast Asia: A Bibliography for Undergraduate Libraries and The Middle East and North Africa: A Bibliography for Undergraduate Libraries. The bibliography on Southeast Asia contains some 750 entries and the one on the Middle East, some 1200. Both bibliographies are arranged by

country and subject and contain an author index. Entries are graded as to essentiality for undergraduate collections and keyed to annotations in other bibliographies and reviews in selected scholarly and library journals. The availability of titles is also indicated.

In the process of compiling and checking the bibliographies, the project staff found that existing bibliographic tools such as Southeast Asia: A Critical Bibliography, published by the University of Arizona Press, contained numerous inaccuracies such as misspelling of author's names, wrong titles, incorrect publication information and the like. In some instances, these errors were called to the attention of the publisher or compiler without any outstanding success.

The project also found that basic reference works such as The Book Review Digest do not index reviews from any area studies journals except Pacific Affairs, a fact which necessitated looking for reviews in each issue of the relevant journal. Because reviews from area study journals are not included, it is the impression of the project staff that fewer books on area studies are included in the Digest; it also seems that fewer books on Asia and Africa are included because they are reviewed less frequently in disciplinary journals. The Manager of the project has written to the publisher of The Book Review Digest and suggested some area journals which might be included, but since the subscribers to the Digest vote on which new journals should be indexed, it seems unlikely that this policy will change.

In a larger sense, completion of these bibliographies, and the others in the same series dealing with other areas of Asia and Africa, constitutes a further refinement, if not a new departure, in meeting the bibliographical needs of these fields of study in undergraduate education as well as the requirements of college libraries. Simultaneously, the Foreign Area Materials Center has developed an important capability in the field of automated handling of information which will enable the Center to apply new technologies of information-handling to educational needs related to undergraduate study of the Third World in other ways in the future. And the mere inclusion of titles in the bibliography, particularly in the more essential categories, has been an important stimulus in keeping them in print or getting them back into print, thus assuring their availability to college libraries interested in acquiring them.

Notes on availability, coupled with computerization, grading as to significance, and keying to critical reviews in the learned journals, reflect a distinctive new approach to bibliographical needs of undergraduate institutions in Asian and African studies. To the degree that college librarians, faculty members, and students find this approach useful, it may inspire future efforts in these fields of academic interest as well as others.

Conclusions

The bibliography on Southeast Asia, which was published in late May, 1970, has sold some 200 copies to date. This number of orders over the summer months and without the book having been reviewed as yet indicates that there is a need in college libraries for this type of selection tool. The bibliography on the Middle East has just been published and no figures on distribution are yet available.

The bibliographies which are also intended to serve as book selection tools, are, it should be emphasized, only one part of a larger "systems problem" in strengthening undergraduate library resources in Asian and African studies. Clearly the interest, bibliographical knowledge of library needs and how to meet them on the part of college librarians is another important dimension to the problem. Both by involvement of individual college librarians in the construction of these bibliographies and by the participation of the Project Manager and Project Director in organization of and recruitment for the special summer session program in non-Western studies for college librarians at Columbia University, as well as the Project Manager's active role in the College Libraries Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries "pre-conferences" on non-Western areas and their implications for college librarians, while not in a formal sense a part of the project, were nonetheless very much related to it and certainly have contributed toward meeting the larger objectives toward which the present project was also directed.

Lack of such opportunities, both in formal programs of graduate training of college librarians and in professionally oriented in-service programs, has been one of the serious constraints on strengthening undergraduate library resources in Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian as well as other Asian and African studies. Other constraints include budgetary limitations, faculty priorities, which often imply giving greater emphasis to more traditional and better represented areas of the curriculum than Asian and African studies, problems of acquisition of materials, particularly those published overseas, and general circumstances of availability with respect to materials in print and out-of-print. The major point to keep in mind in thinking about the varied dimensions of the problem of strengthening library resources in Asian and African studies is that, while better bibliographies geared to the needs of college libraries do make an important contribution, they alone will not solve the problem.

Recommendations

The first and most obvious recommendation is that, since new materials are continually being published, these bibliographies be revised and updated from time to time. An interval of two to three

years would seem to be a sensible one, with the possibility of more frequent supplements. The fact that the bibliographies compiled under the project have been entered on a text retrieval computer program will greatly facilitate their revision.

Even with a continuing program of revision of these bibliographies, it is vitally important that academic journals and particularly those directed toward the needs of college libraries or widely read by college librarians, of which Choice is the most notable, continue to review (and to assess not only the scholarship but also the potential relevance to undergraduate teaching) of new scholarly works in Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian studies. Choice should be encouraged to continue to expand its coverage of books published abroad on these areas of the world, perhaps through more frequent special review articles.

A continuing attempt needs to be made to assure ready availability of books most suitable for undergraduate library use. This implies further effort to make known to those who reprint for the college library market needs in this field, as well as to explore different ways of making books published abroad more easily available to college libraries in the United States. In both of these areas, the Foreign Area Materials Center has had some experience and works closely with agencies concerned with these matters but more certainly needs to be done.

Finally, and most importantly, experience with this project makes it clear that we have only begun to meet the needs of information retrieval and control as they pertain to undergraduate studies of Asian and African societies and traditions. Materials other than books, such as periodical articles and government documents are also vitally important for undergraduate study of these areas of the world. The "publications explosion," furthermore, introduces yet another complexity. Experimentation, thus far confined to large universities with programs of advanced training and research in programs of selective dissemination of information about new publications needs to be initiated in an effort to meet the needs of undergraduate students, faculty members, and librarians.

Summary

The project has been concerned with improving the teaching about Asian and African societies and traditions at the undergraduate level through strengthened library resources. Two bibliographies, designed as selective buying guides for colleges libraries, were compiled-- Southeast Asia: A Bibliography for Undergraduate Libraries and Middle East and North Africa: A Bibliography for Undergraduate Libraries. Entries in the bibliographies were keyed to annotations in existing bibliographies and reviews in selected scholarly and library journals. Information on the availability of each title was also include--e.g., in print, out-of-print, in microform. The bibliographies were produced by computer in order to facilitate editing, indexing, and up-dating and to provide the capability for producing special cross-area lists on request.

APPENDIX A

Consultants for Southeast Asia Bibliography

Paul Bixler, Antioch, Ohio
Nancy Devine, Mt. Holyoke College
Dorothy Drake, Scripps College
Anne C. Edmonds, Mt. Holyoke College
Evan Ira Farber, Earlham College
Cecil Hobbs, Library of Congress
Donald Clay Johnson, Berlin, Wisconsin

Consultants for Middle East and North Africa Bibliography

George N. Atiya, Library of Congress
Nancy Devine, Mt. Holyoke College
Dorothy Drake, Scripps College
John A. Eilts, University of Michigan
Anne C. Edmonds, Mt. Holyoke College
Evan Ira Farber, Earlham College
Harry N. Howard, American University
David H. Partington, Harvard University
Richard N. Press, Northwestern University